

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1 and 2 (Canceled).

3. (Currently Amended) A focus stabilizing apparatus comprising:

an objective lens arranged opposite to an observation sample;

5 a fixing base for fixing the objective lens;

a sample base for supporting the observation sample;

a focus adjusting mechanism ~~provided, which continuously~~  
extends between the sample base and the fixing base, for varying  
a distance along an optical axis between the sample base and the  
10 fixing base;

a minute movement table on which the objective ~~table~~ lens is provided;

parallel springs situated between the fixing base and the minute movement table to allow the minute movement table to be  
15 moved in an optical axis direction of the objective lens;

an actuator provided between the fixing base and the minute movement table to minutely displace the minute movement table in the optical axis direction of the objective lens;

a displacement sensor provided between the fixing base and  
20 the minute movement table ~~[[,]]~~ for detecting a displacement amount of the objective lens; and

control means for allowing the actuator to perform an  
extending/contracting operation based on ~~the basis of~~ a detection  
output of the displacement sensor to control the objective lens  
and bring it to a just-in-focus position relative to the  
observation sample.

4. (Original) A focus stabilizing apparatus according to  
claim 3, wherein the objective lens is focused on the observation  
sample by the focus adjusting mechanism, and then, the control  
means keeps the objective lens focused on the observation sample.

5. (Currently Amended) A focus stabilizing apparatus  
comprising:

an objective lens arranged opposite to an observation  
sample;

a fixing base for fixing the objective lens;

a ~~sample base~~ stage for supporting the observation sample;

a focus adjusting mechanism and a focusing adjusting handle,  
both provided between the ~~sample base~~ stage and the fixing base;

a minute movement table on which the objective ~~table~~ lens is  
provided;

parallel springs situated between the fixing base and the  
minute movement table to allow the minute movement table to be  
moved in an optical axis direction of the objective lens;

an actuator provided between the fixing base and the minute  
15 movement table to minutely displace the minute movement table in  
the optical axis direction of the objective lens;

a displacement sensor provided ~~between the fixing base and~~  
~~the sample base,~~ in a vicinity of an end of the objective lens  
for detecting ~~a displacement amount of~~ a distance between the  
20 stage and the end of the objective lens; and

control means for allowing the actuator to perform an  
extending/contracting operation based on ~~the basis of~~ a detection  
output of the displacement sensor to control the objective lens  
and bring it to a just-in-focus position relative to the  
25 observation sample.

6. (Currently Amended) A focus stabilizing apparatus  
according to claim 5, wherein said control means includes:

a memory section for storing an output of the displacement  
sensor corresponding to a just-in-focus state between the  
5 observation sample and a focal point of the objective lens;

a comparing section for comparing an output of the  
displacement sensor and an output of the displacement sensor  
stored in the memory section; and

a control section for outputting an electrical signal for  
10 canceling a distance variation between the observation sample and  
the objective lens based on ~~the basis of~~ a result of comparison  
by the comparing section.